

BIPSOC: AD HOC LEGISLATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE

Meeting of November 17th, 2006

MINUTES

Present: (8) Maureen Keough, Attorney General's Office/Chair; Laura Jaworski, BIPSOC; Ed Degnan, Kent House; Sage Bauer, RICADV; Michael DiLauro, Public Defender's Office; Dr. Kathleen Carty, Vantage Point; Sisan Smallman, BIPSOC Chair/Probation & Parole; Stephen King, RI Supreme Court.

Materials Distributed:

- Agenda for November 17th, 2006 meeting.**
- Minutes from October 5th, 2006 meeting.**

Maureen called the meeting to order at 1:10pm and asked members to review the minutes from the August 24th, 2006 meeting. Mike DiLauro requested alternative wording in order to clarify a statement he made at the October meeting. Members approved this change in wording; Laura will make the appropriate adjustment and re-distribute minutes with the change reflected.

Maureen reminded members that the main objective of the meeting was to discuss the possibility of legislation sponsorship by the various agencies/departments represented on this Subcommittee. Mike reiterated that it is best that his office not sponsor the

legislation due to strategic reasons. Sisan reported that the Department of Corrections (DOC) is unable to go forward as the lead sponsor. Maureen reported that she has not received an answer regarding the possibility of sponsorship due to some recent staff turnover. She suggested that contact is initiated with Senator Charles Levesque, who introduced the bill during the 2006 legislative session. Sage reported that it was her understanding that the bill would be reintroduced in the during the 2007 session. Mike reported that that the officers established constitutionally should consider the possibility of sponsorship; for example, it may be well received if the legislation is introduced by the Attorney General's Office. Sisan reported that the DOC is extremely hesitant in their interaction with legislators. Maureen reported that she will draft a letter to sponsors to review the proposal that was created as a collaborative effort. The draft will also address the issue that most members are in agreement with the concept of the proposed wording, and that work will begin on the specific adjustments to the Comprehensive Standards.

Mike distributed two (2) articles he recently came across in The Providence Journal and The New York Times which discussed issues around budgetary concerns and re-entry, respectively. He believes that the articles are related to the work that is begin done by the Subcommittee as he feels that during the 2007 legislative session the issues around prison/probation will be raised. Specifically, the issue of technical violations and enforcement will be addressed. It is his belief that the proposed number of hours proposed for credit for

attendance of a batterers intervention program in the prison is not enough—the people who need services should receive them and we [the Subcommittee] should be working to facilitate service delivery. Maureen reported that typically technical violators of probation are not sent to prison. Sisan reported that determining the exact number of is difficult to track, however the Planning Department of the DOC is working to gather these figures.

Steve King reported that the program run in the Adult Correctional Institution (ACI) is held in an artificial environment. As an incarcerated individual could receive up to ten (10) hours of credit for attendance in the ACI-based program, seventy-five percent (75%) of the mandated number of hours would remain to be competed in the community-based program. Mike asked for the significance of ten (10) hours as a basis for credit for attendance. Steve believes that it is simply a reasonable compromise whereby if an individual participates, credit could be given for that attendance and incentive is maintained for the individual to complete the program in the community. Sisan reported that she is extremely involved with the re-entry initiative through the DOC, the goal of which is to provide assistance for inmates in preparation for the transition back into the community by means of strong support, structure, and resources. These services are very often implemented at the beginning of incarceration. She firmly believes that the proposal this Subcommittee has created is in line with those efforts. Sage stated that her concern is with the overall issue of accountability of

offenders if credit is given for attendance in a prison-based program. Further, more support from victim advocates can be garnered if only partial credit is offered. Kathy reiterated that all programs are required to work with clients on the payment of group fees. She reminded members that the individuals that have been sent to prison have committed more frequent and more heinous crimes. Kathy feels that as a result of analyzing the small segment of individuals that do not attend group sessions, we should be working to develop ways to work with those clients in a way that helps them.

Maureen questioned the connection Mike established between re-entry initiatives, individuals receiving counseling, and credit for program attendance in prison. Mike reported that he feels the proposed ten (10) hours of credit is not enough. Sisan stated that the proposal offers up to six (6) hours of credit for the twelve (12) hour program currently offered in the ACI. Ten (10) hours would be available for credit should the program be offered for twenty (20) hours in the future. Mike believes that the Subcommittee's obligation to address the statutory issue had been fulfilled, and the issue of actual number of hours individuals can receive for credit is the work of the BIPSOC. Steve stated that in light of one of the articles Mike distributed to the Subcommittee, the DOC may not even be able to offer any programs in the future due to budgetary constraints. Kathy stated that programs also continue to struggle as they accept referrals of clients who are unable to pay the minimum weekly fee.

Maureen reiterated that she will work on getting an answer from her office regarding the possibility of sponsoring the proposed legislation. She will also draft a letter to potential sponsors to be distributed accordingly among Subcommittee members for feedback. At the next BIPSOC meeting, she will present the work that the Subcommittee has completed thus far. Kathy reiterated her concerns for maintaining a standard of care and continuing to provide quality programming for clients.

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

UPCOMING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING:

Monday, December 18th, 2006 at 1pm

(Location Tentative)

Vantage Point, Inc.

1 James P. Murphy Highway

West Warwick, 02893

Minutes Prepared by Laura Jaworski